

why I'm so proud Members of Congress are here.

We have joined with community- and faith-based organizations to raise public awareness of foster children awaiting adoption. And we've worked with the Congress to assist families to overcome financial barriers to adopting children. Nothing is more vital to this country's future than helping young people find the love, stability, and support from families.

There's a man here—I told him—I warned him I was going to talk about him—and that's a fellow named Tom Wollack. I want my fellow citizens who may be listening to hear this story. Tom has much to be proud of. He served our country in Vietnam; he's a New York City firefighter. By the way, nothing finer than being a New York City firefighter. He rushed to the scene of the World Trade Center on September the 11th, 2001. While others were leaving, he's a bunch of them that went in.

Yet at the top of his list of achievements are his seven children. Three were foster children that Tom later adopted. They're here—two college and one soon-to-be college attendee. They were born to parents struggling with drug addiction. Today, they are deeply loved members of the Wollack family. He calls his family his foundation, and that foundation is here today, right here in the White House. We want to thank you for coming. I thank you for being a loving soul and truing our—showing our Nation the true meaning of family. Thank you, Tom.

Each of the families here has shown the world the depth and wonder of the human heart. And because of people like you, this Thanksgiving holiday will be particularly special for thousands of families in thousands of homes. Many children will be giving thanks for being part of a family they never thought they would have. Many parents will look across the table at children who once were strangers and who are now priceless treasures in their lives.

To the parents here today, please know how grateful we are that you have taken children in need of a hopeful start in life and made them your own. And to the young people here today, always remember that you are special not only because of what your parents have given you but because of the love and joy you have given them. So thankful that the parents and children here today have found the gift of one another. And I encourage our citizens across the land to explore adoption, look into the joys of adoption, and provide love for somebody who needs it.

I want to thank you all for coming. May God bless you and your families. May God bless our country. And now I'd ask the talented Rodney Atkins to come up here and perform some songs for us to celebrate this special day. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady. The National Adoption Day proclamation of October 31 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## **The President's Radio Address** *November 17, 2007*

Good morning. In a few days, our Nation will celebrate Thanksgiving. Like millions of Americans, Members of Congress will

travel home for the holiday. Unfortunately, as they get to work carving their turkeys, they're leaving a lot of unfinished work

back in Washington, DC. And unless they complete this work soon, middle class Americans will pay higher taxes and American troops will not receive the critical funding they need to fight and defeat our enemies.

Many middle class taxpayers will face higher tax bills unless Congress acts on the Alternative Minimum Tax, or AMT. The AMT was designed to ensure that the wealthy paid their fair share of taxes. But when Congress passed the AMT decades ago, it was not indexed for inflation. As a result, the AMT's higher tax burden is creeping up on more and more middle class families.

To deal with this problem, Congress has in recent years passed temporary legislation that prevented most middle class taxpayers from having to pay the AMT. But this year, Congress has yet to pass this legislation. A failure to do so would mean that 25 million Americans would be subject to the AMT, more than six times the number that faced the tax last year. If you are one of those 25 million, you would have to send an average of \$2,000 more to the IRS next year. This is a huge tax increase that Americans do not expect and do not deserve.

The longer Congress waits to fix this problem, the worse it will get. Last month, Treasury Secretary Paulson wrote a letter to Members of Congress warning that delaying action on legislation to fix the AMT could create confusion for millions of taxpayers and delay the delivery of about \$75 billion worth of tax refund checks. Congress has ignored Secretary Paulson's warnings, and we are now beginning to see the consequences. On Friday, the tax forms for 2007 had to be sent to the Government Printer. And because of Congress's refusal to act, the IRS will be forced to send out tens of millions of tax forms that will almost certainly end up being wrong, wasting your money, delaying refunds, and making it even more complicated to figure out your taxes.

It is clear that Congress's failure to adjust the AMT for inflation was a mistake. Unfortunately, Congress seems determined to compound this original mistake by making another one. Last week, the House passed a bill that provides relief from the AMT but raises other taxes. Congress should not use legislation that millions of Americans are counting on to protect them from higher taxes in one area as an excuse to raise taxes in other areas. I will veto any bill that raises taxes as a condition of fixing the AMT. Members of Congress must put political theater behind them, fix the AMT, and protect America's middle class from an unfair tax hike.

Congress is also failing to meet its responsibilities to our troops. For months, Congress has delayed action on supplemental war funding because some in Congress want to make a political statement about the war. On Wednesday, the House passed a bill that once again has Congress directing our military commanders on how to conduct the war in Iraq as a condition for funding our troops. We do not need Members of Congress telling our commanders what to do. We need Congress listening to our military commanders and giving them what they need to win the war against extremists and radicals. Congress knows I'll veto this bill. During this time of war, our troops deserve the full support of Congress, and that means giving our troops the funding they need to successfully carry out their mission. I urge Congress to work quickly and send me a clean bill, so we can fulfill our obligation to our brave men and women in uniform.

With both of these delays, congressional leaders are choosing political posturing over the priorities of the people. These choices have real-world consequences for our taxpayers and our troops. When Members of Congress return from their 2-week long Thanksgiving vacation, they will have only a few weeks left on the legislative calendar before they go home again for their Christmas break. I call on Congress to use the

time that is left to do what is right and pass AMT relief and fund our troops in combat.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on November 16 in the Cabinet Room at the

White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 16, but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks at Berkeley Plantation in Charles City, Virginia *November 19, 2007*

Thank you all. Thanks very much. Thanks for the warm welcome. I am proud to be back in the great State of Virginia. I particularly appreciate the chance to visit Berkeley Plantation. I thank the good people who care for this historic treasure. Over the years, Presidents have visited Berkeley. President William Henry Harrison called it home. As a matter of fact, it was here where he composed the longest inauguration speech in history. *[Laughter]* He went on for nearly 2 hours. You don't need to worry; I'm not going to try to one up him today. *[Laughter]*

Berkeley also claims to be the site of America's first official Thanksgiving. The good folks here say that the founders of Berkeley held their celebration before the pilgrims had even left port. As you can imagine, this version of events is not very popular up North. *[Laughter]* But even the administration of President Kennedy—a son of Massachusetts—recognized Berkeley's role in this important holiday. And so this afternoon I've come to honor Berkeley's history and to continue the great American tradition of giving thanks.

Laura sends her best. Now, most people say, "I wish she'd have come and not you." *[Laughter]* She's doing just fine, and I know she is going to be envious when I describe how beautiful this part of the country is. And I thank you for giving me a chance to come.

I want to thank my friend Tom Saunders, who is the founder of the Saunders Trust for American History at the New York Historical Society. That means he and his wife Jordan are raising money to make sure this site is as beautiful as it is and stays an important part of our history and legacy.

I thank Judy and Jamie Jamieson, who happen to be the owners of this beautiful site, and I appreciate your hospitality. I can't help but recognize my daughter's future father-in-law. *[Laughter]* I appreciate you coming. A lot of people think she's showed some pretty good common sense to marry somebody from Virginia. He's doing all right himself. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate the fact that the Congressman from this district, Congressman Bobby Scott, is with us. Thanks for coming, Bobby. Congressman Eric Cantor from Richmond is with us. And Congressman Randy Forbes, appreciate you coming, Randy.

I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor, Bill Bolling, for joining us. Thank you for coming, Governor. Bob McDonnell, the Attorney General—General, I appreciate you being here. I had the honor of meeting the high sheriff. Sheriff, thank you and your law enforcement officials. I'm proud to be with you. I want to thank all the local officeholders and State officeholders. And most of all, thank you for letting me come by, and I appreciate you coming.